

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 000857

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR IO/EDA AND NEA/NGA
FROM U.S. MISSION TO THE UN AGENCIES IN ROME

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/08/2015

TAGS: [AORC](#) [EAGR](#) [KUNR](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [FAO](#)

SUBJECT: DEPARTING IRANIAN AMBASSADOR MAY SEEK SENIOR FAO
POST

Classified By: Ambassador Tony P. Hall, for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (SBU) Mohammad Saeid Noori-Naeni, who has served as Iran's Ambassador to the UN agencies in Rome since 1994, returns to his academic roots in Iran this month to become Rector of the University of Tehran. Indications are that the Iranian diplomat, who is popular in Rome, may be contemplating a comeback.

2. (SBU) We have found Noori to be an effective consensus builder who has managed to work closely with both G-77 and OEDC delegations in Rome. An articulate leader who combines personal charm and diplomatic savvy with technical expertise in agricultural economics (Ph.D., Cornell University), Noori chaired the WFP Executive Board in 2000 and the FAO Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in 1998-2000. Although he was an unsuccessful candidate for President of IFAD in 2001, he maintained a high profile at FAO as chairman of the negotiations on the contentious Voluntary Guidelines on the Right to Food. Many observers in Rome attributed the harmonious outcome of these negotiations in November 2004 to Noori's active and balanced chairmanship. He has been especially effective in keeping more radical G-77 permreps in check as he argued for pragmatic political solutions.

3. (C) We have been told that Noori may become a candidate for the position of Independent Chair of the FAO Council, to succeed Aziz Mekouar (Morocco) in November 2005. Noori could in many respects be a very strong candidate. Among Rome-based diplomats (and senior officials of the FAO Secretariat), he would probably be the hands-down favorite.

SIPDIS

4. (C) USUN Rome has worked well with Noori in official capacities. He could be a unifying leader of the Council. He has made many attempts to signal good will toward the US delegation, and in one recent sitting defended explicitly the US position against a barrage from some G-77 members. Clearly, Noori's nationality will be an issue for us. The question is whether we would be willing to overlook this or remain silent if momentum builds for a Noori candidacy. It is possible that his chairmanship of the Council could strengthen FAO and that he would be supportive of many USG objectives in the organization.

5. (C) We have already been sounded out as to whether the US would support a Noori candidacy, to which we have made noncommittal responses. Some OECD permreps (such as the UK and the Netherlands) have told us confidentially that they would likely support him for the position.

6. (U) The next Independent Chair of the FAO Council will be elected by secret ballot at the 33rd FAO Conference, 19-26 November 2005. The deadline for nominations will be set by the Council at its 20-25 June 2005 session. Under standard FAO procedures the closing date would normally fall between mid-August and the first week of September 2005. The newly elected Independent Chairman takes up the gavel at the 130th Council on 28 November 2005. Since 1969, the position has been held (in reverse chronological order) by nationals of Morocco, Indonesia, Mexico, Belgium, Tunisia, India, Nigeria, Colombia, and France.

HALL

NNNN

2005ROME00857 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL